The Memoirs of Francis Xavier.

Francis Xavier was born on the 7th of April 1506 at the castle of Xavier which was situated in Xavaire a province of Spain, & at the foot of the Pyrenean mountains. He was the youngest son of Don Juan De Jasso who was one of the most honourable Lords in the state-council of King John the Third. His mother was Mary d'Azpilcueta Xavier a lady of Noble descent & of moderate fortune. Francis had by nature a strong & vigourous constitution — an enterprizing & sublime genius — a sound understanding & quick perception. He likewise possessed invincible fortitude & withal, a versatile mind capable of gaiety & humour by which he could gain upon the feelings of others. — In order to form a justes timate of Xavier's character, of which I am about to give some brief outlines, it will be proper to observe that he belonged to the Roman Catholick communion & that therefore due allowances are to be made for the errours & prejudices of his education. However paradoxical it may seem for a Zealous papist of that age to have been a sincere disciple of Christ; yet we are to judge charitably & not to suppose the thing impossible, since that church notwithstanding its corruption contained some who, though unwilling to leave that communion, maintained the fundamental doctrines of our religion.

The parents of Xavier are said to have been pious & to have inspired him with moral & religious sentiments. They had him also instructed in the latin tongue. When he had obtained an adequate knowledge of this language he was sent to the University of Paris, in the 18th year of his age & there commenced the study of Philosophy. With incessant pains & incredible ardour he made his way through the intricate mazes of the Aristotelian Logick. He aimed at being the first in Scholarship among his fellow Students. After having taken the degree of A.M. he was employed as teacher of

philosophy in the university, & in this profession gained high reputation. The stimulus which his success gave to his vanity, & the importance which he seemed to derive from the nobility of his birth, together with his talents & acquirements, induced him to think of some preferment in the church for wch he was destined. During his residence in the University Ignatius Loyala came over from Spain into France & having formed an acquaintance with Xavier, his young companion Peter Le fevre, he soon brought over the docile temper of the latter to christian piety; but did not succeed so well with the haughty & ambitious mind of Xavier. But after becoming more familiar with him he found his weak side & addressed his vanity. He complimented Xavier on his rare talents — applauded his wit & also used his influence to procure scholars for him. This kind of incense was too grateful to Xavier not to make him propitious to the person who offered it. Thus Loyala, by artifice & good offices effected his conquest. And having gained the attention of his disciple he repeated to him the words of our Saviour, "What shall it profit a man" &c then persuading him that a mind so noble as his ought not to confine itself to the vain honours of this world & that heavenly glory is the only lawful object of his ambition. With these & other flatteries he entirely gained the mind of Xavier. Whether the means were justifiable I leave to you, brethren, to determine. The young convert at length, according to our account, after many hard struggles with his ambition & vain glory, resolved to renounce the world & all its flatteries & devote himself wholly to the service of God. For the purpose of humbling himself & weakening his attachment to worldly things he subjected his body to the most rigourous discipline & other austerities. His contemplations day & night were on divine things. The reproach & suffering of the ~~cross~~ cross of the cross appeared to him infinitely preferable to the applause of men & the pleasures of the world. He resolved to glorify God by all possible means & to spend his life in seeking the salvation of souls. He had, however, imbibed the phrenzy of the times; & formed a design of visiting

the Holy land, that he might see the places consecrated by the presence & blood of Christ, & find a laudable occasion of dying for his divine master. But a war which broke out about this time between the Venetians & Turks defeated his designs. Under this disposition he humbly submitted himself to an over-ruling Providence, & offered himself to God without reserve, to do & suffer whatever he should appoint. Soon after this he was proposed as a candidate for Holy orders. With a view to prepare for this sacred office he retired to a solitary & miserable cottage, that undisturbed by men he might hold communion with God. Here he spent 40 days fasting most of the time & lying on the ground. Previous to his taking orders he was twice attacked with severe diseases which he bore with extraordinary patience, though his abode was in a miserable hospital. Until his strength was almost wholly exhausted, he ceased not to crawl into publick places & call sinners to repentance. While in better health he employed the day in labours of this kind & greater part of the night in prayer. Having lived some time at Bologne he was called to Rome where he continued his pious labours. After recovery from his sickness he preached with increased vehemence. The subject of his sermons were generally death, judgement & the pains of hell; & they were attended with a very considerable success.— About this time John the III. of Portugal, desirous of sending missionaries to the Indies made known his intentions at Rome. Xavier was the person selected for this important undertaking. He was at first somewhat confused & astonished at the appointment of a man so weak & unworthy as he conceived himself to be. But upon more mature reflection & calling to mind his former resolutions, he acquiesced in the divine disposals & offered himself with heart & soul as an instrument for the purpose of converting the Indians. In looking forward to this undertaking he represented to himself vast oceans full of storms & rocks, desert islands, barbarous countries, hunger & thirst raging every where; nakedness, multiplicity of labours with bloody persecutions & imminent dangers of death & destruction. With this terrific view before him he cried aloud, ~~Dixit~~ Adhuc amplius, Domine Deus, adhuc amplius; by which he intimated that this scene of suffering

learned
not enough. He left Rome on the 15th of March 1540 & in
making a journey by land to Lisbon which occupied a month
he was unwilling to ride, but travelled on foot & on all the
way was ready to perform the most servile offices for his convoy
& lodged himself upon the ground. In passing through Navarre when he was a short distance from the castle in which
his mother & relations yet lived, he could not be persuaded to turn
aside & take a final leave of them. His answer was that he
would put off seeing them till he should meet them in heaven
& that the transient interview would only produce melan-
choly & sadness. When he arrived at Lisbon he was unwil-
ling to accept the splendid lodgings prepared for him but
retired to the hospital where he might perform the offices
of humanity & piety to the sick & the prisoners; conversing
occasionally with the courtiers & engaging them in the ser-
vice of God. He remained in Lisbon during the winter
expecting to make his voyage in the Spring. Father Xavier
(as he was now called) was requested to make a note of such
things as would be needful for the voyage, with a promise
that they should be furnished at his desire. They want no-
thing, replied he with a smile, who have occasion for nothing. But
that he might not appear obstinate he consented to take some
small books of devotion. He was strongly urged to take a servant
but he replied; "So long as I have the use of these two hands I will
have no other servant." He now took leave of his intimate com-
panions with much tenderness & christian affection. He seemed
eager to embark in the sufferings which he was about to endure
& to fear nothing so much as that they would be too light.
The signal of departure was at length given & they set sail on
the 7th of April 1541; & in the 36th year of Xavier's age. During
the voyage Xavier was usefully employed in the labours of hu-
manity & christian zeal, both which were greatly needed a-
mongst his fellow-passengers. There were about 1000 persons
in the vessel, whose souls & bodies were his incessant care.
He first set himself to banish the practice of gaming, in which
he succeeded admirably. He became all things to all by conver-
sing with them freely on the subjects with which they were se-
verally best acquainted. By these means he gained general
esteem & brought about a wonderful reformation. The Vice-
roy invited him to eat at his table, but he politely refused

if & contented himself with the fare of the common soldiers.
Toward the end of August the ship arrived at Mozambique in
Africa: Here they wintered. The sick were taken to hospitals
& Xavier attended them with such intolerable toil that he fell
sick himself & suffered extremely. He had scarcely recovered
when they re-embarked on the 15th of March 1542. They arrived
at Goa in May of the same year. After Xavier landed, accord-
ing to his custom he took his lodging in the hospital, although
the Vice-roy invited him to reside in the palace. He very modest-
ly introduced himself to the bishop of that place & began to
view the field of his future labours. There were then but 3
or 4 preachers in the Indies. The natives were given up
to the vilest idolatry, & the Portuguese were but little better,
having, by luxurious living & the example of the natives
fallen into debauchery & idolatry: This awful State of things
enflamed the Zeal of the missionary; & that the blessing of God
might attend his labours, he spent, generally, the greater part
of the night in prayer, allowing himself at most but 4 hours
for sleep. His employment in the hospital was exceedingly
laborious & disagreeable, yet he performed the task with the
greatest cheerfulness. The method he adopted for reforming
the people of Goa was, principally, catechizing the children
which he did with so much effect that the habits of the youth
were soon entirely changed; by which step the more aged
were gradually reformed. Persons under conviction became
very numerous, & resorted to Father Francis, confessing their
sins & asking counsel. After having laboured in this
place for some time, he took shipping around Cape Comorin
to the Eastern coast. This was a poor & parched region, where
a number of fishermen & some merchants had resorted for the
sake of gain. He embarked for this place in oct. 1542, refus-
ing to take any provision for his voyage except a pair of
shoes which were necessary in those burning sands.
Here he laboured with the same assiduity as formerly & brought
over great numbers of the idolaters: Even the Brahmens,
his greatest enemies, respected him. His manner of life was
such as contributed greatly to the success of his labours. His
food was the same with that of the poorest people; chiefly rice
& water. He limited his sleep to 3 hours, & took it on a fish-
ers cabbin on the ground.—In writing to one of his friends

from this place he says: "I have no more to add, but only that they who come hither to labour in the salvation of idolaters, receive so much consolation from above, that if there be a perfect joy on earth it is that which they feel." In the course of ~~a few~~ one month he is said to have baptized some thousands of ~~these~~ idolaters who vied with each other in demolishing their pagan temples. He was ardently solicitous that more missionaries might be sent to the Indies. In a letter to Europe he writes thus: "I have often thoughts to run over if it were possible all the universities of Europe, & to cry aloud to those who abound more in learning than in charity. Ah! how many souls are lost to heaven through your default! How were to be wished that those people would apply themselves as diligently to the salvation of souls as they do to the study of the Sciences, that they might render to Almighty God a good account of their labours & the talents he has bestowed on them. They would then say from the bottom of their hearts behold me in readiness O my Lord! Send me wheresoever thou shalt please; even to the Indies if thou commandest me". Xavier was unwilling to continue long in one place, but was resolved to carry the gospel wherever he could; from kingdom to kingdom, from isle to isle & to the farthest limits of the East. He now formed a design of passing over to the isles del Moro. For direction in which he asked counsel of God by importunate prayer; after which he could be dissuaded by no entreaties of his friends, who represented to him the sufferings he must endure in those isles. "If, replied he, those isles abounded in precious woods & mines of Gold, the christians would have the courage to go thither, & all the dangers in the world would not be able to affright them; they are base & fearful because there are only souls to purchase." And shall it then be said that charity is less daring than avarice? You tell me they will take away my life either with the sword or poison; but this is a favour too great for such a sinner as I am to expect from heaven. Yet I dare confidently say that whatever death or torments they prepare for me, I am ready to suffer a thousand times more for the salvation of only one soul." What a noble spirit, brethren, for a missionary! Yet perhaps somewhat tainted with Romish superstition. — In these inhospitable isles

he suffered the extremes of hunger thirst and nakedness, but was blessed with abundant inward consolations. While laboring here he says himself; "I do not remember ever to have tasted such interior delights & these consolations of the soul are so pure, so exquisite & so perpetual that they take from me all sense of my corporeal sufferings". In one of his voyages he was in great danger of shipwreck, respecting which he thus writes. "Having reposed all my hopes in the infinite merits of my Lord & Saviour; & being encompassed with his protection I enjoyed a greater satisfaction in the midst of this raging tempest than when I was wholly delivered from the danger". In very truth being the worst of all men I am ashamed to have shed so many tears of joy through an excess of heavenly pleasure, when I was just upon the point of perishing; Insomuch that I prayed our Lord that he would not free me from the danger of the shipwreck, unless it were to reserve me for greater dangers for his own glory & service". In giving advice to some missionaries who came to assist him in the Indies he speaks thus. "Let your conversation be always confined to the spiritual subjects of death, of judgement, of hell, of frequenting the holy communion & the exact observation of Gods commandments". "The servants of God, in the communications they have with him refresh themselves after the pains they have taken for the good of their neighbour—. The salvation of one soul ought to comfort a missioner for all his pains. God regards our good intentions, & a servant of his was never esteemed unprofitable who laboured in his vineyard with all his strength whatever his success might prove. It is the distinguishing character of a disciple of Christ to take more pleasure in the hardships of the cross than in the softneys of repose."

So much, brethren, has Father Francis spoken for himself, & these sentiments may be considered as so many traits in his character. Let us again pursue him in his labours. Having, while at Goa, become acquainted with a man of reputation from Japan, & having made him a convert, he learned the deplorable situation of the Japonese. He therefore determined to go thither. In April 1549 he embarks for Japan, & on his voyage stops at Cochin. As he was walking the street of this town one day

he met a Portuguese of his acquaintance & asked him how he was in health. The Portuguese answered, "he was very well". "Yes, replied Xavier, in regard to your body but in regard to your soul no man can be in a worse condition". The man was struck with astonishment & remorse, repented of his wickedness & became a hopeful convert to christianity. Xavier arrived at Japan on the 25th August. He immediately set about acquiring the language, which he speedily accomplished, so far as to be able to give some instructions to the natives. He met with great opposition & was in danger from the Bonzas the Japanese Priests. However gaining the victory, they pretended to distinguish themselves in the eyes of the people by pretensions to austere living, but their known practice was not equally strict. Xavier excelled them all in austerity, for he confined himself to bitter herbs & boiled pulse. The success of his labours according to his own account was extraordinary. Whole towns were converted to the christian faith, & these converts were so fervent in their piety that they talked of nothing else than the things of God. There is not a christian in Japan, says he, that would not rather lose his life than forfeit the love of Jesus Christ. After remaining some time in this part of the island which is called Amanguchi he embarked in a vessel bound for the Indies, & touched at another part of the island called the kingdom of Bungo. Here Xavier landed & was received with tokens of the greatest joy & respect. But palaces are not the most favourable places for publishing the gospel. He had little or no success with the King & Nobles. The King, however, is said to have reformed after Xavier's departure. And he was successful amongst the poor of the place & was so intent on his labours amongst them that he detained the vessel two days after it was ready to launch. In Nov. 1551 he left the Island of Japan after spending 2 years & 4 months there; & being instrumental in converting, as it is said, some thousands from idolatry. After meeting with so great success in this country, he is

encouraged to hope that he might introduce the gospel into China. His mind is bent upon this with a resolution which no remonstrances of his friends can shake. After his arrival at Goa he pursued measures for his intended voyage to China accordingly he set out in April 1552 with James Pereyra a merchant who took Xavier in a vessel of his own. But on their arrival at Malacca all all their prospects were blasted. Alvarez the governour of the Portuguese possessions in that peninsula, having an old grudge at Pereyra, under cover of some pretext, seized the vessel & thus put an end to their voyage.

Father Francis was deeply affected with these things. He was grieved for the wickedness of Alvarez, the ruin of his friend Pereyra, & the defeat of the embassy to China; & he imputed to himself these misfortunes as being occasioned by his sins. He did not however, relinquish his design of visiting China; & to accomplish it more conveniently, he embraced the first opportunity & proceeded to Sancian a small island near Canton. After he had arrived here his friends endeavoured to dissuade him from so hazardous an enterprize. But he answered them I have set up my rest & nothing is capable of altering my resolution. Let all the powers of Hell break loose upon me; I despise them, provided God be my portion. He agreed with a Chinese merchant for a stipulated reward to carry him to the province of Canton. The merchant promised to hide Xavier in his own house 4 days, at the same time acting of him a promise that no torments however cruel should induce him to confess either the name or the house of him that had set him on shore. Xavier made as solemn an engagement as he could desire — aware at the same time of the cruel tortures to which he exposed himself. The merchant, however, on pretence of making a short excursion & engaging to return at a certain time, proved false to his word & was never more seen by Xavier. Disappointed in his schemes, & forsaken on a desert island by most of his countrymen who had vessels on the coast, & almost destitute of what was necessary to support life, he

fell into a fever. He received some kind attentions from individuals but was generally neglected. He now saw his end approaching & foretold the day of his death. Earthly things became altogether disgusting to him & he thought on nothing but that heavenly country whither he seemed to be now called. He was for some time in a delirium & again for three days lost his speech. When he recovered his speech he was constantly employed in prayer, which he made in Latin & therefore little understood by those around him. The last words he pronounced were these; "In te Domine speravi; non confundar in aternum" & with a cheerful countenance instantly yielded up his spirit into the hands of God. This took place on the 2d. of Decemb. 1552, in the 46th year of his age & ten & a half years after his arrival in India. His funeral was made without any ceremony & persons only being present. Thus ended this extraordinary missionary whose name was revered as far as it was known. [illegible] is due to the [illegible] riars & several temples built to his honour. The number of souls, to which he was made the means of conversion, has been estimated at 100.000.

The following hymn which I found in MS. is said to have been written by Francis Xavier.

O Deus! ego amo te,
Nec amo te ut salves me,
Aut quia non amantes te
Æterno punis tu igne.

Tu, Tu Mi Jesu totum me
Amplexus es in cruce;
Tulisti clavos lanceam
Multamque ignominiam,
Innumeros dolores,
Sudores et angores,
Ac mortem — et hæc propter me
Et pro me peccatore

Cur igitur non amem te?
O Jesu! amantissime!
Non ut in cælo salves me,
Aut ne æternum damnes me,
Aut præmii ullius spe;
Sed sicut tu amâsti me
Sic amo, et amabo te,
Solum quia rex meus es
Et solum quia Deus es.

ΕΚΦΑΝΤΑΖΟΜΕΝΟΥ ΧΑΒΙΕΡΙΑΝΟΥ
ΑΠΟ ΙΑΚΩΒΟΥ ΜΟΝΤΟΥΕΣ